

STATE BOARD FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM PROFESSIONALS  
RESIDENTIAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS TO MINIMUM STANDARDS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Goals of Certification.** The Certification Committee identified the following as goals of a certification program for child care workers as RCYCPs:

- 1) Certification provides recognizable professional status. It clearly denotes the skills of an individual, and it is a commonly understood measure of knowledge and achievement.
- 2) Certification means that an individual has demonstrated their ability to meet a minimum uniform standard.
- 3) Certification assures that individuals have an appropriate background and core competencies necessary to effectively care and supervise vulnerable children.
- 4) Certification affords a means for recognizable proficiency to licensing and accrediting agencies, funding sources, and the industry.

The State Board makes the following recommendations for modifications to the minimum standards for Residential Child and Youth Care Practitioner certification:

**Recommendation 1 - Authority to Waive Fees.** The State Board should have statutory authority to waive fees on a need basis.

**Recommendation 2 - Waiver of Certification Requirement for Maryland School for the Blind.** The Maryland School for the Blind should receive a waiver for the certification requirements given the para-professional certification requirements imposed by the Title 1 No Child Left Behind through Maryland State Department of Education for the child care staff of this residential child care program.

**Recommendation 3 - Investment in Child Care Workers.** Certification leads to the recognition of the status of individuals who are entrusted to care for children for residing in residential child care programs. It is important, therefore, that investments are made in child care workers to ensure that professional standards are maintained in the services they provide for the State. The State Board supports incentivizing child care worker certification and developing a minimum salary structure based upon the increased requirements of certification.

**Recommendation 4 - Initial and Annual Training Requirements for Child Care Workers in the Core Regulations.** The core regulations for residential child care programs should be revised to reflect the following requirements for initial and annual training requirements for child care workers.

- A. Child care workers should receive the following initial trainings:
  - (1) Emergency preparedness and general safety;
  - (2) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation leading to certification;
  - (3) First-aid training;
  - (4) Child abuse and neglect identification and reporting;
  - (5) Suicide risk assessment and prevention (minimum 1 hour);
  - (6) Approved forms of discipline and behavior management techniques including crisis management and the use of isolation and restraint;
  - (7) Medication certification, if applicable to assigned duties; and,
  - (8) Infection control and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Bloodborne Pathogen Standards.
- B. Child care workers should receive the following annual trainings:
  - (1) Emergency preparedness and general safety;
  - (2) Child abuse and neglect identification and reporting;
  - (3) Suicide risk assessment and prevention (minimum 1 hour); and
  - (4) Infection control and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Bloodborne Pathogen Standards.
- C. Child care workers should maintain current certification in the following areas:
  - (1) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation leading to certification;
  - (2) First-aid training;
  - (3) Approved forms of discipline and behavior management techniques including crisis management and the use of isolation and restraint; and,
  - (4) Medication certification, if applicable to assigned duties.
- D. All other training items should be moved to the State Board's regulations for professional development (continuing education) option areas.
- E. Annual trainings in paragraph B could be included within the 20 hours of continuing education for RCYCPs every two-years.

**Recommendation 5 - Purpose of the RCYCP Training Program.** The purpose of the RCYCP training program is to provide a fundamental working knowledge of the varied aspects of performing the direct responsibilities related to the activities of daily living, self-help, and socialization to children and youth in out-of-home placement. Child care workers will increase their awareness of their essential role to the vulnerable children and youth to who they are entrusted to care and supervise. Child care workers will also obtain insight into the overall environment and function of a residential child care program. Successful completion of a training program will prepare a child care worker for certification as a RCYCP.

**Recommendation 6 - Uniform framework for RCYCP Training Programs.** All training programs must consist of at least 30 contact hours, which may include hours spent in initial training with the exception of: cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first-aid, behavior management, and medication certification. The training program must: (1) cover the six modules – overview of the RCYCP training program; child and adolescent growth and development; standards for health and safety; life skills development; legal and ethical issues in child care; and communication techniques - and (2) address specific course objectives and topics outlined within the training program framework. At the end of each module the child care worker must pass the post-test (corresponding section of the Standards Examination) with a score of at least 70-percent.

**Recommendation 7 - Venue for RCYCP Training Programs.** The RCYCP training program should be made available to all child care workers through a free, online webinar style training format. Residential child care programs should have the flexibility to customize the training program to reflect their program and the needs of the children and youth served. Residential child care programs could develop their own training program, train their child care staff through the online training program, develop hybrid training programs by utilizing some modules from the online training program, partner with another residential child care program, or seek a vendor to provide the training to their child care staff.

**Recommendation 8 - Protocol for Approving Training Programs.** The State Board will review training program curriculum to determine the program's conformity to the uniform framework and core competencies identified for direct care workers. The approval process should consist of the following:

- (1) An application for the RCYCP Training Program will be posted on the State Board's web site.
- (2) Residential child care programs and interested parties, if interested in developing a program, will be instructed to submit applications to the State Board.
- (3) The State Board will designate a subcommittee to review applications and make recommendations to the State Board.
- (4) The review committee will meet a minimum of quarterly to review applications. Review dates will be posted on the State Board's web site.
- (5) All applications must be received 30 days prior to the schedule review date.
- (6) If the review committee determines that the application does not meet the standards required by the State Board's regulations, the State Board will notify the applicant in writing, within 10 business days, of the deficiencies and the process to provide any information or changes to the training program to address the deficiencies.
- (7) The applicant may request a meeting after the second notice of deficiencies. Requests for meetings must be made in writing and list the topics to be discussed. The State Board will not provide technical assistance in developing training curriculum. After the third notice of deficiencies, the applicant must submit another application.
- (8) If the review committee determines that the training program meets requirements, a recommendation for approval will be forwarded to the State Board.
- (9) The State Board will review the recommendation of the review committee.
- (10) All approved programs will be listed on the State Board's web site.

**Recommendation 9 - Approval Fee.** The fee for training program approval is \$15 per module or \$90 for an entire training program. The State Board may waive the fee charged for processing the application, if the applicant has demonstrated a capacity to offer the training for no or nominal cost. A request for waiver of fee must be made in writing to the Board.

**Recommendation 10 - Qualification of Trainers.** The curriculum vitae and biography of all instructors (and potential instructors) should reflect competence in subject matter and skill in the instruction methodologies. Meeting the criteria requires that the provider will not substitute instructors.

**Recommendation 11 - Educational/Training Requirements for Certification.** The minimum requirements for certification should be simplified to:

- (1) Associates or bachelor's degree in a human service or related field,
- (2) Associates or bachelor's degree in an unrelated field with one-year human service experience; and
- (3) High school diploma or GED and completion of a Board-approved training program.
- (4) Individuals who complete the training program at CCBC will be deemed to have met the standard of an associate's degree in human service or related field.

**Recommendation 12 - Trainee Provision.** A provision for trainee status for child care workers should be provided. Upon hire, a residential child care program should provide notification to the State Board. The newly hired child care workers has 180 days to complete all the modules of the training program and pass the corresponding post-tests. The child care worker has an additional 30 days to become certified. Child care workers who have a college degree have the opportunity to take the Standards Examination, which is comprised of the post-tests for all of the modules of the

training program, up to two times within 30 days. If the child care worker with a college degree fails any of the post-tests, they are required to take that module(s) of the training program.

**Recommendation 13 - Grandfathering Clause.** All child care workers who are employed by October 1, 2013, and who have been continuously employed as a child care worker for at least one-year for individuals with an associates or bachelor’s degree and two-years for individuals with a high school diploma or GED should be grandfathered into certification. In addition, they will need to provide: (1) three professional references, of which one must be the Certified Residential Child Care Program Administrator of the residential child care program and (2) submit to a national and criminal history record check. Child care workers who apply to be grandfathered into certification as RCYCPs will not be required to take the Standards Examination.

**Recommendation 14 - Standards Examination.** The Standards Examination should consist of standardized post-tests to be completed after each training module. For those individuals who have a college degree, they have the opportunity to take the Standard Examination (all of the post-tests) up to two times within 30 days. If they do not pass the Standards Examination, they will need complete the modules of the training program that they failed. Any individual with a disability may request, pursuant to COMAR 10.57.03.07 E, modifications in examination materials or procedures upon written request to the State Board.

**Recommendation 15 - Fee for Standards Examination.** There should be no fee charged for the Standards Examination since it will be made available on-line to all child care workers as part of the RCYCP training program.

**Recommendation 16 – State Board Regulations Should Reflect Criminal History Requirements from the Core Regulations.** The State Board’s should reflect the criminal history requirements from the core regulations for residential child care programs (14.31.06.05 A(4)(i)(c)-(e)).

**Core Competencies.** The core competencies for child care workers were also reviewed and revised by the Certification Committee in order to reflect the essential minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for child care workers in residential child care programs. The core competencies were then cross-referenced to each module within the RCYCP Training Program.

Child care workers need to demonstrate their ability to meet the minimum knowledge, skills and abilities for the mastery of the following core competencies: (1) communication skills; (2) child and adolescent development; (3) cultural competence; (4) family partnerships; (5) health and safety; (6) community development skills; (7) therapeutic child and youth care; and, (8) treatment and service planning and improvement, and (9) activities of daily living.

**RCYCP Training Program Framework.** The purpose of the RCYCP Training Program is to provide a fundamental working knowledge of the varied aspects of performing the direct responsibilities related to activities of daily living, self-help, and socialization to children and youth in out-of-home placement. Individuals who complete the training program will increase their awareness of their essential role to the vulnerable children and youth to whom they are entrusted to care and supervise. Also, they will obtain insight into the overall environment and function of a residential child care program. Successful completion of the training program will prepare an individual for certification by the State Board.

Training programs will be approved by the State Board and must consist of at least 30 contact hours, which may include hours spent in initial training with the exception of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first-aid, behavior management, and medication certification. Training programs must cover the following six specified modules, which reflect the core competencies. Each module must address course objectives outlined in the framework provided by the State Board. The Standards Examination for RCYCP will consist of the post-tests completed after each module. An individual must score at least 70-percent to pass each module. Those individuals with a college degree or who have completed the program for RCYCPs offered through the Community College of Baltimore County will have the opportunity to take the examination two times within 30 days. If they do not pass the Standards Examination, they will need to complete the modules of the training program that they failed.

*Training Program Module Crosswalk to Core Competencies.*

<i>Training Program Module</i>	<i>CC #1</i>	<i>CC #2</i>	<i>CC #3</i>	<i>CC #4</i>	<i>CC #5</i>	<i>CC #6</i>	<i>CC #7</i>	<i>CC #8</i>	<i>CC #9</i>
<i>Overview of the RCYCP Training Program</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Child and Adolescent Growth and Development</i>	✓	✓	✓						✓
<i>Standards of Health and Safety</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
<i>Life Skills Development</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Legal and Ethical Issues in Child Care</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
<i>Communication Techniques</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Core Competency Key

- CC #1 = Communication Skills
- CC #2 = Child and Adolescent Development
- CC #3 = Cultural Competence
- CC #4 = Family Partnerships

- CC #5 = Health and Safety
- CC #6 = Community Development Skills
- CC #7 = Therapeutic Child and Youth Care
- CC #8 = Treatment and Service Planning and Improvement
- CC #9 = Activities of Daily Living and Support

The modifications recommended to the training program for child care workers will increase access to and availability of training programs. Residential child care programs have the flexibility to develop a training program, seek a vendor to provide training to their staff, or partner with another residential child program. The State Board supports the development of a secure, web-based, free training program for all child care workers.

**Conclusion.** While the 2015 implementation date for the certification of child care workers may be feasible with grandfathering of existing child care staff, it is important to note there many variables and uncertainties at this time that make implementation of the certification program for child care workers challenging.

Legislation is needed to implement certain changes to the statutory requirements for the certification of child care workers made by recommendations contained within this report. It is uncertain how long it will take to develop an online training program and corresponding Standards Examination for child care workers. The operational impact on the State Board is considerable and the lack of additional resources could result in a backlog of initial certifications and approval training programs. This could create workforce shortages for residential child care programs. It is unclear if residential child care programs could financial bear the cost of certifying their staff. While the State Board can easily change its regulations, the core regulations for residential child care programs have to be approved by the various state licensing authorities and the Department of Budget and Management. It is estimated that process could take up to one-year. The core regulations are critical to supporting the changes to the certification program for child care workers, initial and annual training requirements; as well as, the State Board's regulations. All of these variables could impact the State Board's ability to meet the 2015 implementation date. Consideration may be needed for a phased-in approach to implementation in order for the State Board to meet the 2015 implementation date.

The State Board remains committed to professionalizing the role of child care workers in residential child care programs. Professionalizing child care workers is the best method to attract dedicated individuals to the field and to maintain a well trained workforce necessary to meet the increasing acuity of children in out-of-home placement. Certification is the first step in that process. It is a vehicle of ensuring that there are uniform standards of practice, facilitates a common language, and a commonly defined purpose that binds the field of child care together. The State Board will, therefore, continue to advocate for additional resources to implement the certification program for child care workers.